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ABSTRACT

The chains that link economic, social, cultural, and other factors to produce poverty need to be broken. The number of poor people has increased: one European in eight lives below poverty thresholds. New social categories are affected; the proportion of adults of working age is rising. The new poverty is also different because of its geographical location and concentration in cities. Financial poverty is exacerbated by numerous other factors--inadequate schooling, lack of vocational skills, family size, and health problems. If poverty is regarded as a social construct, a powerful connection is found among a low income based on public assistance, confinement to certain types of housing and certain types of economy, and a lower life expectancy. A deficient education is a consequence of poverty that means less power. As workers become less interchangeable, the mechanisms of social protection prove unable to cope. Long-term unemployment combines in a different way the various elements along the road toward poverty, which is the process of growing insecurity. Social mechanisms contribute to living for the moment. Reorganization of the system of social agents has resulted in a new division of social work. Charitable organizations and educators are now being involved in preparation and implementation of solutions. Education must be integrated into a long-term comprehensive action. More types of partnerships are needed, action should be decentralized, and the very poor and the economically insecure must be seen as active partners. (YLB)

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COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL CO-OPERATION

ADULT EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

EDUCATION, POVERTY AND INSECURITY

A new social contract to restore the dignity of the very poor
and strengthen general solidarity

REPORT

by

Gérald BOGARD
(Consultant)

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Only questions related to national defence are excluded from the Council of Europe's work, and the Organisation has activities in the following areas: democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms; media and communication; social and economic affairs; education, culture, heritage and sport; youth; health; environment and regional planning; local democracy; and legal co-operation.

The **European Cultural Convention** was opened for signature in 1954. This international treaty is open to European countries that are not members of the Council of Europe, and it enables them to take part in the Organisation's programmes on education, culture, sport and youth. So far, 31 states have acceded to the European Cultural Convention: the Council of Europe's full member states plus the Holy See, Romania, Russia and Yugoslavia.

The **Council for Cultural Co-operation (the CDCC)** is responsible for the Council of Europe's work on **education** and **culture**. Four specialised committees - the Education Committee, the Standing Conference on University Problems, the Culture Committee and the Cultural Heritage Committee - help the CDCC to carry out its tasks under the European Cultural Convention. There is also a close working relationship between the CDCC and the regular conferences of specialised European ministers responsible for education, culture and cultural heritage.

The CDCC's programmes are an integral part of the Council of Europe's work, and, like the programmes in other sectors, they contribute to the Organisation's three over-arching policy objectives for the 1990s:

- the protection, reinforcement and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and pluralist democracy;
- the promotion of an awareness of European identity;
- the search for common responses to the great challenges facing European society.

The CDCC's education programme covers school, higher and adult education, as well as educational research. At present, its main priorities are projects on: the European dimension of secondary education; university co-operation; adult education and social change; modern languages; and the pooling of the results of educational research.

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PREAMBLE

In 1988, at the initiative of the CDCC, the Council of Europe started an activity entitled "Adult Education and Social Change". It had two objectives: firstly, to identify the new forms of adult education introduced in the various countries of Europe for two categories of the populations: the long-term unemployed and older people; and secondly, to draw from these observations "elements of good practice" for an adult education that would help these people to adjust more effectively to the constant changes in society and to become actively involved in such changes rather than mere passive spectators.

The two topic groups established by 25 countries, soon joined by Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia, decided upon a pragmatic approach of study trips to observe on-going actions in the field and to meet the wide variety of people involved in this education.

The chosen method of approach led the members of the group to consider that, except for some special fringe activities responding to certain particular needs of these populations, their conclusions were relevant to a much broader public.

It therefore appeared necessary to broaden the definition of the target groups to cover all the people concerned by the profound upheavals in society and their modes of regulation, even though such radical transformations do not take the same form everywhere but in some places lead to an emphasis on changes in employment and in the systems of organisation and technology, and in others to changes in the social and political system.

Although all population groups are concerned, the poorest ones need to be given special attention. In this connection - along the lines of what socio-economic systems had previously created in the form of systems of initial education, technical vocational education and continuous vocational training - the group had reached a conclusion as to the need to develop an autonomous system of permanent education for the re-socialisation of adults.

Today, it is interesting to resume this analysis from a different angle and to gauge its relevance and validity in the light of the needs and preoccupations of persons facing the daily trauma of poverty and insecurity.

"The progress of humanism is slower than people say, and can be reversed."
Jean-Michel Belorgey

Every society has its poor people.

However, poverty as a patchwork of immutable situations and highly personalised patterns of progress is a phenomenon more often encountered than rigorously defined. Since actions are fragmented as a function of various types of target public, there is a strong temptation to see only individuals or more or less homogeneous groups. So what is there in common between an elderly man, a female head of family and a handicapped person?

In spite of this apparent diversity, it seems in order to speak of poverty in general if one asks Brian Abel-Smith's question: "Could I wish my family to live like that?" The fact recalled by E. Mossé strongly asserts itself: "Poverty exists, always the same in spite of its differences, always characterised, repetitively and compulsively, by want, by insecurity and by exclusion".

As soon as one attempts to come up with more precise and even indisputable criteria, poverty emerges as a polymorphous and relative concept. In spite of the value, for defining social policies, of approaches in terms of thresholds, poverty can no more be delimited by "some chalk line or other" (Mossé) than the poor can be lumped into a homogeneous group with a clearly defined profile; there exist several types of poor population and several types of poverty in these populations. Diversity and heterogeneity are not merely imperfections of the analytical grid applied. On the contrary, they have to do with the social product of poverty and hence will be key factors in the implementation of a policy to combat it. It remains to explain the variations between the different categories of persons affected by poverty, changes in their relative proportions and pathways that lead such people to poverty.

These must be the considerations underlying a policy to combat poverty, at a time when the Europe of the Twelve has some 44 million persons, or one European in eight, living below poverty thresholds.

I. APPROACHES TO POVERTY

THE CHANGE IN POVERTY

An increase in numbers

Most surveys are in agreement: the number of poor persons (receving less than 50% of the average income in each country) increased between 1973 and 1984 from 13 to 14% of the total population of the 12 Community countries, in other words an increase of from 38.6 to 43.9 million persons. Of the 12 Community countries, eight have more than 10% poor people and four have 20% and over.

ATD - Quart Monde states: "In the 12 countries of the European Community (323 million inhabitants) there are 44 million persons with very low incomes, 16 million functional illiterates, six million long-term unemployed, one million homeless and at least 10 million living in dire poverty".

A qualitative change

The increase in the number of poor people is producing new victims in terms of age, sex, level of skill and social status. E. Mossé quotes the significant example of the city of Rennes in France: "A category of the poor exists at Rennes, composed as indeed everywhere else of mentally handicapped persons (slight or serious) or physically handicapped persons (victims of occupational accidents or otherwise disabled) but also of agricultural workers driven from the farms where they worked by machines, of "wanderers" and other itinerant persons. ... For some years past, a category of new poor has emerged: alongside the old generation of tramps, there is now a new generation of young people living continuously in conditions of insecurity, and making their home in a milieu of instability. These new poor have frequently slight physical or mental handicaps which would not have prevented them from gaining access to the labour market during boom periods, but which almost inevitably exclude them at times when unemployment is increasing".

Clearly, the "profile" of the poor has changed as much as the kind of policies to be applied. The most marked characteristic of this change is the increase in the proportion of adults of working age but trapped in a spiral of educational failure and the impossibility of gaining proper qualifications and finding a regular job; an age, therefore, when the burdens of dependants and responsibilities are greater. This downwards age shift is explained by the improvement in the standard of living of older persons and even more by the deterioration in the position of young adults brought about by the spread of unemployment, the difficulties in the way of professional integration and the inadequacy of supplementary family resources.

The new poverty is also different on account of its geographical location and concentration in the cities. Firstly by a reversal of the phenomenon from rural to urban; secondly by the transformation of the urban scene, particularly the specific phenomenon of the suburb. The economic management of space and habitat are not unconnected with impoverishment. People are driven from city centres, deprived of the facilities for provisioning which the latter offer (unsold stock at food outlets for example) and placed in housing which segregates them in terms of categories and modes of living frequently foreign to their own culture. The official policies governing allocation of social housing share in these economic management procedures and the process of social exile.

A "new poverty?"

Thus, just as much as economic growth, the development of social security machinery has contributed to uprootedness, the disintegration of the family networks and concentration in a certain type of habitat. This causes us to reject the interpretation of poverty as a social constant, independent of historical and socio-economic conditions, whose extension is due only to a "displacement of the indicator", shifting the "poverty threshold" upward, extending it to hitherto untouched categories.

On the contrary, this phenomenon today presents new features which are the result of a general change in society, on which its very existence casts light. "Poverty is no longer an accidental or rather contingent phenomenon. Accidents along the way and an unfavourable economic climate lead to situations of insecurity which are more or less pronounced depending on membership of particular population groups", wrote Father Wrésinski. The number of the poor increases under the effect of a discontinuous process revealing a change of societies in depth and not only through an increase in the population sectors affected brought about by the aggravation of social conditions.

INADEQUACIES OF DEFINING POVERTY IN TERMS OF INCOME

Combating poverty presupposes criteria for defining the phenomenon. In everyday terms, poverty obviously has to do with inadequate income. But is this definition sufficient?

Poverty as loss of income

The population with which we are concerned may be defined, in regard to sources of income, by exclusion from employment and from solidarity networks. The range of substitute incomes is growing but they are not set in a coherent framework. For example, unemployment gives rise to a benefit but that benefit is of a temporary nature only. With the increase in unemployment, which is frequently a family or neighbourhood phenomenon, solidarity on the part of the family or class is no longer able to take over.

The loss or low level of stable incomes, any more than the criterion of inaccessibility to recognised standards of living enunciated by the Commission of the European Communities, is not sufficient in itself to explain the phenomenon. Of course, below a certain level of income all those items which other people regard as basic necessities become inaccessible. Consideration must also be given to how such income is employed, and this turns out to be constrictive. David Donnison has provided an excellent illustration of this. Living in the suburbs means reduced access to shops, public transport, centres of activity and employment, services in general and particularly medical services. So people "buy poor quality food at high prices from poor travelling vans: they go without proper meals in order to keep an old car on the road because the bus service is poor; they work on the margins of the economy ...".

The urban explosion is marked by the dissociation between workplace and dwelling place. Anyone living in a suburb without public transport facilities requires a car before they can even try to work. Leaving early in the morning and returning late at night define feeding habits, the domestic appliances accompanying them,(deepfreezers and microwave ovens), supermarkets for doing the shopping and the timetable which they impose. The same applies to looking after children ... Daily life thus patterns itself on the world of production, with its key notions of investment and profitability. Overhung by the recurrence of unemployment and the irregularity of substitute incomes, poor families are subjected like others to this "forced consumption", without however possessing concrete means for managing it.

The cumulation of handicaps

The immediate representation of poverty defined by the notion of income is perceived to be inadequate, even if such a definition is sophisticated. Just as the description given by D Donnison impels us towards a more complex approach, Jean Labbens states that "people are not poor because they have no or not enough money; the poor are without resources or income because, through absence of health, gainful employment, education, contacts or negotiable capital, it is impossible to invoke rights vis-à-vis other people or vis-à-vis their labour".

Poverty is exacerbated by numerous factors such as inadequate schooling and its consequences in terms of functional or complete illiteracy, the lack of vocational skills, the size of families, problems of accommodation (its nature and location), problems of health, sometimes problems of alcoholism, and almost always shortened lifespans ... Poverty is neither a stable state nor a predestined condition but simply the result of a cumulation of handicaps. Its progressive character is proved by the nature of the emergency assistance provided by governmental poverty programmes - distribution of food, emergency accommodation, funds to cover unpaid rent or electricity bills etc.

Poverty is a threat for persons living in situations of precariousness that are often unsuspected even by themselves. Large numbers are today surviving on a low income thanks to special conditions and their art of "getting by". One day they may lose their job or their home, fall ill or be beset with family problems or the accumulation of debts etc.

A collective, inherited and self-perpetuating phenomenon

"In the West", as P.-H. Imbert reminds us, "poverty was regarded at best as an accident, a temporary phenomenon, and at worst as an inevitable consequence of the overall development of society. There was also present the idea that those who found themselves in such a position bore part of the responsibility for their predicament". Despite these preconceptions, poverty is not merely an empirical aggregate of individual situations nor, with respect to its causes, is it an individual phenomenon. D. Donnison cites the case of Ballymun in Ireland: in 1989, 62% of the men and women of working age were without work, 85% of these without work for more than a year and 22% for more than 10 years. In September 1991, riots occurred at Meadowell (United Kingdom). The subsequent discussions included the figure of 86% of the active population as being jobless. Poverty is everything except the results of bad luck or some accident. Poverty is in fact inherited. At the core of all poverty case-histories, there are stories of children separated from their parents, and young people without work or vocational skills forced to leave their families under poor conditions and themselves one day becoming parents of large and fragmented families.

Poverty is a creeping and self-perpetuating force associated with a given environment. It is the result of a combination of social, economic and cultural processes etc. This combination is itself a double phenomenon, a mutual stiffening and consolidation of these processes.

References to a cumulation of handicaps, a collective phenomenon or self-perpetuation etc. indicate how the machinery of protection no longer functions or at least is enfeebled and how, starting from a situation of vulnerability, this machinery triggers a process of impoverishment and in certain cases makes it irreversible.

POVERTY AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

It is by regarding poverty as a social construct that we find the powerful connection between a low income based on public assistance, confinement to certain types of housing and to a certain type of economy (informal or underground in some cases) and job (when there is one), a lower life expectancy, etc. "In Great Britain", according to D. Donnison, "the children born of unskilled parents have an average life expectancy of eight years less than those born of parents working as senior executives". It is indeed a question of social causality to which all individual situations are subordinated.

A "two-speed" society

Though there is a lot of talk about the dual society, it is a subject that should be approached with caution. If society is indeed becoming dual or rather "balkanised", this is because two related phenomena are intervening concomitantly in the economic and social "spheres" and provoking transformations on a large scale within the various social categories.

It is, as the counterpart of society, of science, of advanced technology and of new means of communication, falsely represented by the "golden boys", that this other society of poverty unfolds before us.

Poverty in the face of the explosion of employment ...

In the last few years, the distinction between, on the one hand a labour force employed full time, with all social protection, paid at the highest rates and even enjoying rights to training and, on the other hand, the world of intermittent jobs with little protection has become much sharper. In reaction to over-protection, not to mention the measures merely designed to avoid counting job-seekers as unemployed, the solutions advocated in most countries to combat the growing queue of unemployed persons have led to an increasing number of short courses, early retirement schemes and even transfers to other systems of social protection. It is highly significant that a proportion of the "excluded" are following precisely this type of pathway. On one side hardship and on the other an economy of surpluses, on which moreover a cushy "charity business" has even been built up through the distribution of surplus clothing, food or medicines, are participating in the same overall social phenomenon.

... and of changes in the need for skills

Training and the acquisition of skills are decisive in this double social phenomenon of "dualisation". The social categories of which they are composed are the outward expression of a social undercurrent, of a society subjected simultaneously to the upheavals of technological modernisation, the hardship of unemployment and changing modes of capital accumulation. Industrial automation requires a different understanding of production

processes: skills in programming, control and networking. At present, the coupling of this automation with a Taylorian approach to the organisation of labour has resulted in a polarisation of workers: on the one side, the most highly skilled for programming and control operations and therefore the best paid and the least interchangeable, and on the other, the least skilled, the lowest paid and the most vulnerable in regard to security of employment, liable to exclusion from the world of work at the first downturn in growth. Among the latter, the most at risk are those whose status as a productive worker is compromised by physical or mental disability.

However, it should also be pointed out that this "different understanding" is not applicable exclusively in respect of the processes of generating economic wealth. Programming, control and networking are also at the core of the creation of individual and family beings. It is not without significance that, from this viewpoint, the poor are deprived of this possibility. This vulnerability is no accident but is central to the constitution of their status, in fact the very condition for its reproducibility. This being so, we may examine the symbolic rating of games of chance and lotteries, the winnings of which are by definition not programmable.

The vulnerability-insecurity-poverty cycle

The most innovative aspect of the Wrésinski report is to regard poverty as the product of insecurity and to describe an irreversible process that leads from vulnerability to the deterioration of individual and group situations. "Insecurity is the absence of one or more factors of security ... that enable persons and families to assume their professional, family and social responsibilities and to enjoy their fundamental rights. The insecurity that results from this may be more or less extensive and have consequences of varying gravity and permanence. It leads to serious poverty when it affects several areas of life, when it takes on a persistent character, and when it compromises the chances of people resuming their responsibilities and winning back their rights by their own effort in a foreseeable future".

This approach takes more satisfactory account of the dynamic nature of the process and makes it important to understand the transition from one state to another and more particularly the nature of the factors that govern this transition and trigger the process of deterioration.

Situations of fragility occur around the major problems of employment, health, housing and income, and come to represent critical situations. In France in 1987, according to a survey by the Centre d'étude des revenus et des coûts (CERC) (Income and costs research centre), more than one family out of five was vulnerable, ie exposed to the risk of an abrupt fall in income through loss of job or long illness. The presence or absence of various factors plays a part in mitigating or on the contrary accentuating the vulnerability. Lack of savings, unforeseen expenses, inability to work, mainly because of illness, and non-availability of housing in case of need - all these are numbered among these factors.

It is therefore necessary to consider the matter the other way round. What is significant is the reproducibility of means of coping and above all the balances thus contrived when an unforeseen situation makes it necessary to find substitute solutions. The start of a breakdown must be understood in terms of the absence of a solution to take the place of the

previously existing balance. The critical-situation factor explains why there is no uniformity of status in the types of social condition which result. There is thus a difference of degree between situations of vulnerability, of insecurity or of poverty. Vulnerability is associated with lowness of income, but changes into insecurity when it becomes impossible overall to preserve the balances which had been established in coping with everyday life. The dominant element here is the interaction of all the factors that trigger poverty (employment, income, housing, education, health etc.) and the programme increase in vulnerability until it becomes impossible for a person to redress the sudden deterioration of his or her situation. According to this approach, social status can play an important role, particularly as regards the possibility or otherwise for individuals to have recourse to any kind of network. Isolation, helplessness and ignorance - particularly in terms of its impact on the ability to make effective use of established networks, rules and systems - are the cause and not the effect of pauperisation.

II. SCHOOL AND UNEMPLOYMENT - FACTORS DETERMINING INSECURITY

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

While social status is at the root of pauperisation, the school plays an important part in forming its components.

Socialisation by the school is second in relation to socialisation in the family, whose function in this respect it takes over. Educational socialisation normally imparts an objective form to what is acquired during the subjective phase of socialisation. This however presupposes continuity and compatibility. Is it possible to talk of equality of opportunity when this machinery assumes the existence of arrangements which are not always in place? The democratisation of access to education has not been accompanied by its (nevertheless vital) precursor of overhauling the formal, axiomatic and abstract systems associated with the school at the time when it was restricted to reproducing a social elite.

Lack of education

Education as it is perceived is based on effort. However, is it not associated with certain conditions of work with which poor children are particularly unable to comply and in the absence of which they have no hope of learning reading, writing and arithmetic, or of developing their power of thought or of mobilising the powers of the spirit? Is it going too far to describe "conditions of work" as the assistance with which parents may contribute, the cultural environment, material conditions conducive to peace and quiet and the possibility of concentrated thought and even ambition which stimulates and supports motivation by marking progress with reward or punishment? The fundamental preoccupation with food and housing or the scenes of violence to which the child is frequently witness are not favourable to an effort at study, the yield from which, in any case, will be disproportionately less than the input which it represented.

Figures cited for France in the Wrésinski report, and which deserve to be extrapolated to international level, show that attendance at nursery school is a factor determining the educational success of children at the primary school stage. Specialised education is, characteristically, governed by cultural standards to which children participating in such education have no access. The factors governing aptitude for admission to these institutions

are not neutral. They are based on tests imparting standard status to the mean performance of an age group, ignoring individual differences in power of acquisition. In this connection, it is particularly noteworthy that the pupils undergoing this education have mostly originated from particular cultural milieux whereas the criteria for admission frequently present themselves as psychological criteria.

Straightaway, young people originating from the most insecure milieux are thus on the road to exclusion from the educational system and many of them will be without recognised skills when they complete their school attendance: all recent statistics on young people undergoing a difficult transition to employment prove this, as also do analyses on the distribution of diplomas among the active population.

While in the majority of countries there is a high rate of unemployment upon completion of school attendance, marking a difficult transition to working life, we should also note the difference in situation as between those who have a recognised skill and those who do not. Unemployment rates rise much more sharply in the case of young people without qualifications.

School as a segregating factor

It has often been noted that school created differences between individuals; with respect to poverty, it appears that it has a more general and collective role through failure to take account of the facts of poverty as significant elements and hence as culture and knowledge.

The school takes as already acquired and widely disseminated things which are so only in the case of some individuals. Thus, the prospects of success, educational support by parents, mastery of language, ability to read and write, the understanding of advanced methods, decent material conditions for learning, some degree of stability in the family and social relations - all these are preconditions which the school assumes are met. As against that, when young people's poverty, hence their entire lives, disqualifies them as a source of acquiring knowledge they must inevitably be impelled towards rejecting their own world (often after a desperate struggle) or, more frequently, towards withdrawing into themselves and into their immediate environment. Poverty brings forth different responses on the part of the individuals undergoing it, and it is making use of this difference which would lie at the basis of building up and expanding knowledge. If "advantage" is not taken of poverty, in the same way as it is of other factors, as constituting an element of learning and socialisation, the failure then frequently causes individuals to lose confidence in their own capacity to learn. "Cut off from others, one cannot participate in their ways of thought and can no longer share one's experience of life with that of others" (ATD).

Re-examination of educational methods alone is insufficient and irrelevant, as is the establishment of specialised branches of schooling. Bringing together specific groups for instruction leads to the formation of ghettos and to the separation of cultures, instead of extracting from them knowledge useful for everyone, thanks to a felicitous discovery of their co-existence.

The impossibility of acquiring qualifications

Though not always the deciding factor, the level of qualifications is a component of marginalisation. According to the EC, it is among the unemployed that poverty is increasing the most. J.-P. Vélis describes the process that links the lack of qualifications to unemployment: "At a time of economic crisis, their previous failure at school is transformed into social and professional failure; one false step and they find themselves without a job, without a family, in the street and, if nothing turns up to stop them, doomed to swell the numbers of the new poor".

Furthermore, it emerges that in professional life access to training is restricted to the most favoured individuals. While specific courses and arrangements have been introduced in the majority of countries for job-seekers, this type of action has frequently been observed to be unsuited to the target populations and hence lacking in effectiveness.

Qualification-imparting vocational training remains totally out of reach of population groups who are disadvantaged on the cultural level; similarly, training more directly oriented towards social integration is not sufficient to compensate for what has not been acquired at school and is unable to fill the resultant gaps.

Regarding employment status, it should be pointed out that the fragmented careers of the poorest individuals, associated with the numerous variants of employment status held (and accepted due to the absence of anything better) do nothing to facilitate access to training offered by firms, and even go so far as to inhibit recognition of the knowledge and skills acquired during periods of work.

A deficient education means less power

Poverty thus constitutes an obstacle that prevents children from acquiring the knowledge which is indispensable for their future independence. The poor are kept out of the systems of expression and representation. They have less opportunity to pass on to their children a cultural capital that permits a genuine integration into social and professional life while the conditions of permanent insecurity in their daily lives limit the educational possibilities of their children in all fields. To quote ATD, "Living in poverty is living in a world on its own: children have little or no chance of gaining a window on the world except through school".

The rediscovery in most countries of the problem of functional illiteracy, defined as the inability to retain the most elementary components of education, ie the familiar three Rs, highlights the process of self-perpetuation of social exclusion. For people whose social position exposes them to administrations and their demands, to the need to fill in forms, to search for and even to negotiate jobs, and to cope with low incomes and indebtedness, difficulty in reading, writing or reckoning becomes dramatic indeed.

The long-term unemployed are rarely involved in trade union activities and have only recently in certain countries set up organisations to represent them. Families depending on public assistance or private charity seldom take part in the work of associations which could mediate their concerns. Functional illiteracy and lack of education weigh heavily on their

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chances of being able to defend a political opinion and, more broadly, to exercise their civil and political rights. To quote E. Mossé, "the most deprived know their rights, as relayed by word of mouth, but their knowledge is frequently incorrect or incomplete". Persons without a permanent address cannot be entered on the electoral roll and are therefore excluded de facto from the right to vote. In the view of G. Lagouanelle and D. Druesne, "the poor are also people who are not aware that rights exist for them".

The political and social inferiority of the poor has reinforced the inferiority of their economic status.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY

Faulty education and the nature of the latter are, however, not the only components of the vulnerability-poverty line of reasoning. There is no doubt that today employment has a greater impact than other factors on the phenomena of poverty, and unemployment now appears to be the determining feature of the descent into insecurity. Firstly, there is the expansion and diversification of forms of salaried employment; secondly, wider recourse to unofficial labour, subcontracting and interim procedures such as methods developed by firms for coping with production fluctuations; finally, of course, unemployment as a result of these "flexible" measures increases selectivity on labour markets.

While, during boom periods, population groups which are unskilled or suffering from more or less serious physical or mental disabilities are able to obtain jobs, they are rejected during times of slump. This weakening of their position is cumulative because a low level of skill combined with a low level of income causes further exposure to unemployment. E. Mossé has shown that in Belgium "it is thought that the risk of unemployment registers a divergence of from one to 14 per category of income when the scale of incomes goes from one to five".

The situation of the least skilled on the labour market has been rendered more difficult thanks to the introduction of "externalising" labour. The impossibility of finding a job over a long period of time or the need to accept a job below the seeker's level of skill enhances the precarious nature of family management and hence vulnerability. Furthermore, employment and social security sometimes work against each other; thus, employment calls for ever more mobility on the part of workers, but frequent changes of residence sometimes involve non-payment of social benefits.

From unemployment to long-term unemployment

Since the end of the last century, the "unemployed" category has been based on a dual movement of differentiation between "unemployed" and "non-employed" on the one hand and correlation with the definition given to the "firm" as a unit of production and with the emergence of a new legal conception of a work contract on the other. According to Robert Salais, "between the 1930s and the 1950s, the state became the necessary, distant and anonymous intermediary of the work relationship ... the condition of being unemployed came to be recognised outside the firm. The unemployed person now became an individual available for work who was seeking a paid job and for whom the state was expected to find employment ...".

In keeping with this conception, systems of insurance against unemployment grew up in most countries during the period of full employment. Though long-term unemployment was not unknown, it was only seen as a side issue and usually regarded as the consequence of personal choice or the concealment of resources derived from illicit work. This explains why unemployment benefits were limited to a few months or a year. We have come full circle. A cycle has ended. The Keynesian logic has served its purpose. What used to be important for macro-economic approaches is now revealing its inadequacy. Workers are becoming less interchangeable; the mechanisms of social protection, geared to a mass society, are proving unable to cope.

Long-term unemployment as a central feature of "new poverty"

Long-term unemployment is not only a specific form of unemployment; it borrows from spheres of the social dimension other than those of employment/labour. It combines in a different way the various elements along the road towards poverty, which is simply the process of decreasing flexibility that sets in between the conditions of vulnerability and poverty.

The changes in the functioning of labour markets and the growing number of unstable jobs reflect the fragmentation of individual careers. But today the treatment of such fragmentation is no longer confined to the institutional and cultural frameworks of the semi-skilled. There exists no institutional mechanism that makes it possible to manage, in a single system, late arrival on the labour market, long-term exclusion, the resumption of work after a long interruption, forced early retirement and so on. This problem is aggravated by the fragmentation and disparity of sources of income.

Situations have to be dealt with on an individual basis. It is up to the individuals concerned to grapple with the lack of continuity in their careers. In a society in which the dual link connecting production to employment and employment to income has been broken, it is left to individuals to acquire the personal capacities that will enable them to keep a step ahead of the "zapping" of institutions and firms. Coping with the lack of continuity in their careers and the associated uncertainty is also a skill which ever more persons should possess or acquire.

This makes the crucial issue that of the qualifications, not of persons as individuals in a specific occupational situation, but of the socio-cultural content or "equipment" needed for their integration into society. It is not only a question of knowing how to read, write and count. It is necessary to be able to use these skills in highly specific situations. The "qualifications" we have in mind are not related to technology but to life in society and are quite obviously basic skills. Daily life is made up of relations with different administrative services, use of the written word and certain special forms of communication that call for particular skills.

G. Lagouanelle and D. Druesne "often find people quite unable to write a letter or curriculum vitae, to make a telephone call or approach an administrative service or employer for something. Behind all this lies a major handicap: the inability to organise one's thoughts, to concentrate one's attention, to grasp the contents of administrative documents or small

advertisements. Whereas the poor should be the chief beneficiaries of certain social provisions, their inability to understand official forms, or procedures like the right of appeal in the case of dispute, drives them away ...".

The emergence of "new poverty" accompanies the reopening of the discussion on coping with uncertainty, social insurance and its organisation, the distinction between employment and non-employment, the identification of the various social agents together with their levels of responsibility and the organisation of their modes of action. The existence, on such a vast scale in the countries of Europe, of functional and complete illiteracy and the exclusion from work, gives no encouragement to think in terms of coincidences.

On the contrary, these phenomena indicate that social reality can henceforth not be understood in terms of the models which were evolved for that purpose, any more than institutions structured on the basis of these models are adequate to furnish an appropriate response.

THE LOGIC OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE LOGIC OF ASSISTANCE

It is possible to compare the two distinct approaches to social insurance that have emerged between the end of the 19th and the end of the 20th century. In both cases, social insurance is viewed in connection with interruptions of work, regarded as normal. The real problem is to ascertain who is responsible in the event of such an interruption so that the respective liabilities of the individual, of the occupation and of society can be determined.

At the end of the 20th century, a new pattern is developing with the gradual introduction of measures to guarantee a minimum income. But the systems of social protection in the various countries of Europe are based on the system of full-time employment, which is now in a state of upheaval.

This is why, with the type of population groups in question, we find ourselves at the intersection between two distinct rationales which are at the same time two types of social construction: the logic of insecurity and the logic of assistance.

Each rationale has its own categories, its own professionals and its own institutions. Marginalisation takes its place at the intersection of the two.

The role of specialised institutions in shaping the "poverty career"

The specialised institutions do not remain neutral where the conjunction of the "three deficiencies" - in income, qualifications and job - is concerned.

In most countries, the measures taken to combat poverty owe more to the historical development of the social protection systems than to new conditions such as long-term unemployment. Hidden in the management of assistance is a multiplicity of concepts signifying exclusion. The economic factor, the cultural factor, age, health, unemployment etc. are all features of the processes of exclusion which have justified the establishment of institutions or specialised staff and of specific methods. Yet, the progressive specialisation of their fields of action has its share in the atomisation of a real situation, whereas all that is

happening is the interaction of the forces of self-perpetuation of exclusion. The institutionalisation of the administrative handling of poverty thus leads to the disembodiment of the latter, and to transforming the poor into objects supported by numerous rationales which not only escape them but prevent them from seeing themselves as active entities. Grouping together populations "at risk" (which by a typically technocratic synonomity become "problem" populations), isolating them socially, separating members of families, differentiating the mode of handling economic and social aspects etc. amount to instituting a process of growing dependence where the only possibility of choice bears on the comparative advantages of the various types of assistance.

Inadequate social provisions

Unemployment benefit payments were introduced at a time when unemployment was perceived theoretically and practically as an exceptional situation. The benefit paid was sufficient then to "bridge the gap", which has led some commentators to believe that behind the unemployed worker, the head of household or the sick person, the target was the consumer. In other words, the Welfare State briefly took over the role of customer assigned under the economic system to individuals and families. However, this system is today decried as representing a passive policy, while the discontinuities are no longer exceptional but recurrent. There is nothing to show that the aim, here also, is anything but the maintenance of the response to the requirements of the economic system; however, there is no doubt that the very fact that passive policies are inadequate proves that the expectations of the economic and social system are no longer the same, and that there has been rethinking in this department.

Coping with discontinuities and their uncertainty

When the resources originating from family or comradely solidarity are exhausted, insecurity sets in. The resources emerging from social transfers then become the only quarter to which to turn. However, because these transfers are differentiated and specialised, they contribute to the formation of pathways of exclusion and of specific social statuses liable to give rise to a variety of responses, ranging - as S. Paugam has shown - from rejection of assistance to its intelligent exploitation. Thus, at the meeting point of general socio-economic rationales and administrative rationales, the nature of social alternatives and of the economic processes at work affects the existence or non-existence of active solidarity among social groups.

Far from being handled in a co-ordinated manner, these discontinuities are expressed in the dominant image of a fracture: anxiety about the future and living for the present. Indeed, it is precisely here that we can discern the greatest danger for social cohesion, for, in addition to physical isolation and segregation, there is also the inability to find one's place other than in the present moment, ie to situate oneself within a personal history and work out a personal project that is more than an unrealistic dream.

Furthermore, against the background of an increase in long-term unemployment, the present-day labour markets are increasingly fragmented. There exists a variety of personal profiles that are all subject to job insecurity; and this fragmentation will most probably become worse in the years to come. However, not only are the least qualified persons the

become worse in the years to come. However, not only are the least qualified persons the most lacking in these skills, but the types of activity proposed - work or training courses - fail completely to counterbalance personal situations dominated by repeated failures that have not been overcome.

Limited to the present moment

The difficulty of dealing with insecurity is reflected in a differentiated pattern of interiorised social behaviour in the poorest categories ranging from the rational utilisation of help and adaptation to assistance, to attempts to escape into alcoholism, drugs or fringe activities, even violence. Under these conditions, official measures are shown to be incapable of remedying the situation. To quote M. Houillon, "the hostels and social rehabilitation centres are regarded as a stopping place, a welcome breathing space, in the slide towards poverty which the economic and social environment renders irreversible. The same judgment, with but a few qualifications, could be made in regard to all forms of assistance, whether or not of a social nature and whether in kind or in cash (integration benefits), whose purpose is to inform, train, transform, back up, monitor, listen to or help in formulating a project, the persons excluded from the production system". Thus, faced with the impossibility of evolving realistic projects tied up with the insecurity-poverty process which leads to living for the moment, the social mechanisms simply reinforce this process. Being designed for emergency situations and desperate cases, they can only come into action after a certain delay, once the emergency has been officially recognised, and simply contribute, through the diversity of administrative categories, to the segmentation of insecurity into isolated cases and moments of time.

A new definition of urgency as the principle of action

Why should urgency become a fundamental category? It is of course a system being eaten away on the inside that allows urgency to surface as a massive problem. A proportion of the problems spring from the slowness of administrative procedures. Forms of social aid exist; aid is sometimes available but it arrives late. In such circumstances, action to combat poverty is condemned to failure. Remedial action is indispensable; preventive action, related to different forms of insecurity, is necessary.

The concept of urgency is now applied as much to situations as such as to their underlying dynamics. As the dynamics of a situation cannot by definition be covered by any measure, any possibility of action by the administration along the lines practised hitherto is ruled out. One can only measure what one knows how to measure, ie the amounts of aid distributed. There is thus the category of the "unreachable" if not that of the "untouchable". Whereas our societies are capable of building shelters for animals which migrate in winter, a number of severe cold spells would have been necessary to recognise, in the underground railway corridors or on the pavements, the phenomenon of internal migration of the most "disinherited", ie those who are excluded from social redistribution and transfers.

It is within this new opening that new protagonists must come forward and help to devise new categories for action reflecting the change in outlook that their mobilisation implies.

"Assistance and social work have always been based on the coupling of material aid and educational assistance. But we are now witnessing a decoupling of these two elements. With the growing insecurity that is affecting increasingly broad segments of society, the need for material aid is becoming less of an exception. And this need is developing along with a rejection of tutelary forms of assistance. This is happening at the very time when educational activities are paying increasing attention to new forms of social development (what are called transversal social policies, namely the social development of local districts, crime prevention, integration of young people and so on) which act, not on the individual or defaulting family, but on the conditions for rebuilding a promising environment for each person." (J.Donzelot).

III. POVERTY AND SOCIETY

CONTINUITY OR DISCONTINUITY?

Renewed social solidarity?

Regarding social cohesion, it appears that there also we are at the end of our tether. Everything that was built during the 30 post-war boom years and the vicious sphere of growth was founded on the triple basis of protection of purchasing power, a compromise regarding fiscal solidarity and a preservation of status, ie of advantages gained. This is the position with employment associated with indefinite full time. The social dimension is today the battleground between corporatist interests; but has not this already shown its blind alleys? Should not the appeals emanating from both the political and the associational world not already be viewed as attempts to pass from fiscal solidarity to a renewed social solidarity?

While social and economic conditions invalidate the former concepts, job statuses diversify, social pathways can no longer be perceived in terms only of the linear progress of promotion, and social policies change in an effort to become "active" etc, these ideas of status and fiscal solidarity are called into question. The former social compromises collapse, as an accompaniment to the emergence of a new poverty.

The parameters of discontinuity

In studying the "Fourth World", Jean Labbens suggests that these individuals "do not belong to industry; they are not part of the industrial world. It is for this reason that they are poor. Only the payments made to them, their partners or their children derive from the modern society; but these payments are not enough to integrate them into that society or to free them from their poverty". This interpretation suggests the possibility of a different way of looking at the question, a way that is not based on the hierarchisation of society and vertical mobility but draws largely on the separation and co-existence of distinct social systems. What Jean Labbens is pointing to is a discontinuity related to individual status, which is itself related to the source of the income, ie whether it is earned or, on the contrary, comes from public assistance.

Each society is defined by its systems of social regulation and especially by their characteristic modes of operation. These systems are essentially the family, the school, the system of urbanisation, the firm, and the system of social protection. They operate through

their systems of co-ordination and the mechanisms they create to ensure coherence. Our hypothesis is that today, these systems, modes and mechanisms of regulation are no longer functioning. They are undergoing a profound transformation which leaves "holes" in the articulation of the various components of the overall system and hence in its overall cohesion. The new poor are none other than those whom their situation submerges in the indeterminate dimension of this non-operation of the modes of regulation. Their "new poverty" is polymorphous only because it borrows from the interface between two social systems, one of which is on its way out and the other in the process of emerging. The new poor are in and for modern society what the "proletarians" were in and for the nascent industrial society.

A socio-economic revolution

It is not a question of some minor change corresponding to the readjustment of certain elements, as was the case in western societies after the last two wars or, in the 1960s, accompanied by powerful technical development. On the contrary, the transformation being experienced by the societies of this new Europe is affecting the economy and politics as well as the social and cultural domains and is reaching every single area of life. It is a fundamental change like the one which reshaped agrarian societies at the beginning of industrialisation.

The computer revolution is not a new phase of the industrial revolution; it breaks new ground because it requires a radically different organisation of society. The insistent emergence of the notion of a guaranteed minimum income is no accident; it is a direct consequence of the new requirements of production systems.

The system of income redistribution has shifted: it has moved from the context of a just exchange, in which remuneration is the monetary counterpart of the product created by each person, towards that of just distribution in which a growing proportion of a person's income is independent of any participation in the productive effort. Thus the principle of an income determined according to personal, family or social criteria is taking shape. In France, in 1959, this income accounted for 19% of household incomes; in 30 years it has doubled.

This is bringing into existence an economy and a society based on distribution, through the establishment of an "unconditional right of everyone" to sustained assistance. But the first signs are appearing of the need for other categories and other lines of reasoning for the organisation of a new society in the absence of which we shall have to face the implications of the fact that part of the population may remain permanently outside the production system. Today, the essential problem is socialisation of individuals. The socialisation process, that is to say its institutions and forms, is bankrupt.

The parameters of the new socialisation

The forces at work affect all strata of the population, though in different ways. What is at stake is the articulation of the various pathways to socialisation. Everyone is concerned by the appearance of ever more new products and new technologies, by the metamorphosis at all levels of the world economy and the strengthening of interlocking relationships, by the

radical change in the relations between human societies themselves and between them and the world environment, by the emergence of a new and more diversified and more complex international division of labour, by the various rates of population explosion and above all by the social and cultural consequences of these upheavals.

The responses worked out and applied in practice to meet the situations called forth by the changes in societies cover the gamut of these situations, and reveal, in varying degrees, a common ground in which the cohesion of the social fabric is questioned. Underlying all these apparent differences, what we are witnessing is the restructuring of socialisation processes and, consequently, the redefinition of the components of this socialisation, their role and their nature, among which education has a strategic part to play.

Redefinition of the social dimension

Despite their ambiguities, the advantage of minimum income institutions, and particularly in France the "revenu minimum d'insertion" (minimum income linked to occupational integration) is that it draws the line between social factors and work in a different way and helps to define them differently. Certainly, "moralising" conceptions of work-in-return-for-assistance have not entirely disappeared. Nevertheless, another configuration is emerging, involving a revision of social protection and also of the modes of representation and definition of employment and non-employment, finding its expression for example in a review of the legal bases of their identification. One definition of the social dimension is giving way to another. It is within this new opening that new protagonists are coming forward and helping to devise new categories for action reflecting the change in outlook that their mobilisation implies.

The emergence of two new participants and a new division of labour

The dual logic of unemployment and assistance referred to above is that of the Welfare State and its institutions and categories. Today, this logic no longer works. However, it would be a mistake to regard that as a problem of budget, of insufficient resources to meet growing needs. It is less a question of resources than a question of approach, of outlook.

Associations and educators are the new participants in re-organising the system of social agents and restructuring the social division of labour which results from it. We should not allow ourselves to be misled by the long history of charitable movements, or for that matter the long history of education. What is important is their emergence today in the forefront of events and their participation in the evolution and application of responses. This is the way to view the measures taken in an effort to apprehend, in that context, the restatement of categories now occurring, particularly since the parameters of intervention are developing.

The problem of intervention is shifting away from personalised curative action towards the bond linking insecurity and poverty, and which renders one the inevitable determinant of the other.

NEW PARTICIPANTS FOR A NEW SOCIAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

The charitable organisations

In this context of another "definition of the social dimension", let us draw attention to the growing role of charitable organisations. They are supported in the main by an ever more professionalised body of voluntary workers and their entrenchment in disadvantaged milieux. Their action is judged on its day-to-day involvement, in the momentary flash of a temporarily relieved distress and of a tirelessly maintained network of solidarity. Charitable organisations are marked by their entrenchment in disadvantaged milieux and the need permanently to brace their emplacement is incidentally the reason for their continuous renewal. This has led D. Ferrand-Bechman to predict that "quite soon, alongside the vast and more and more professionalised charitable fortresses, we shall see the emergence of new cells such as self-help groups, weaving a third safety net ...".

Be that as it may, their knowledge of the milieux in question is ancient and thorough, born of long labour and an attitude of continuous receptiveness. They cannot take the place of institutions in the public domain, but should seek with them pathways to more fruitful co-operation. It is not a matter of exchanging responsibilities but of everyone playing their respective aces. As soon as the question of urgency arises on the interface between insecurity and poverty, the work of these associations becomes multidimensional, though too indefinable to fit in the categories of public action. Any attempt to measure it would be a delusion. Their function is not only to respond to situations of evident despair and destitution but also to intervene in a variety of ways in a variety of individual situations which nevertheless all relate to the same mechanisms of "disqualification".

The specific approach of educators

In order to take action, the educators need to base their work on the particular characteristics of the individual or group concerned. For them, poverty cannot be reduced to an abnormal situation to be dealt with by the taking of urgent measures.

For the educator, the reality of poverty is a hard fact that cannot be broken down. Any attempt to define specific criteria for the purpose of distinguishing the poor person from other social groups turns out, when such criteria are used by the educator, to be disappointing and in vain. Analysis shows it to be preferable to adopt another approach as the basis for a coherent and pertinent policy of educational action.

The involvement of the educator in the fight against poverty constitutes in itself one of the new characteristics of poverty: it draws attention, on the one hand, to its persistent nature and medium or even long-term consequences and, on the other, to the articulation between the individual and the collective outlook.

In view of the situation of gradual entrapment and narrowing options which is the most important trait of poverty, the purpose of mobilising educators could be defined as the testing of a policy and programmes that could back up reintegration of these communities into the flux of society.

The educator will therefore be more specifically concerned with poverty as a social process, as a special and radical form of marginalisation, with three complementary characteristics:

* it exists in different degrees;

* it is a compound of disparate elements in unequal proportions but not mutually exclusive;

* lastly, beside these intrinsic characteristics, it should be regarded as the product of a social dynamic that operates on these various components and eventually shapes the multifarious forms of poverty.

A new social partnership

A new social partnership begins to take shape between the private and the public dimension. At present it is inadequate, mostly in human terms, and has so far been unable to exercise an influence over systems and institutionalise itself as a permanent entity. In recent years there have been numerous efforts to remedy this defect, inter alia, by examining the institutional link between the economic and the social lines of reasoning. Activities of community value or general interest, intermediate (or reintegration) undertakings, co-operatives in Ireland or in Italy, the establishment of enterprises by the unemployed etc are all ways which have been explored for producing a synergistic effect between the social and the economic dimension, integration devices and means of production. It is not a matter of exchanging responsibilities but of everyone playing their respective aces. A similar trend can be observed in the establishment of new strategic partnerships aimed at reorganising the division of labour between education, production and the social factor. In this connection, reference can suitably be made to one of the most interesting examples launched in France by Bertrand Schwartz under the term "Nouvelles Qualifications".

IV - THE NEED FOR OVERALL SOLUTIONS

Even a return, hypothetical it must be added, to economic growth will not in itself reverse exclusion processes and reinstate the poverty-stricken as members of society. It is not a question of level of growth, but more a problem of the functioning of society and a remodelling of its modes of regulation. In the narrowest definition of poverty as an individual experience, however dramatic that experience might be, it is possible to take the view that appropriate aid, especially financial assistance and help with housing in conjunction with individual back-up, could provide a solution.

But when poverty is regarded as a collective phenomenon, it must be perceived as one of the forms of social exclusion which it is only possible to remedy or to prevent by means of an overall social policy.

The need to take action

There are three reasons why poverty must be fought.

First of all we have a moral obligation. As Father Joseph Wrésinski emphasises, "wherever human beings are condemned to live in misery, human rights are violated: it is a sacred duty for us to join together to see that they are respected".

Secondly, it is an economic necessity because the low level of income of a large proportion of the population leads to an under-consumption detrimental to the economy, which is no longer sufficiently stimulated; at the same time, the movement of this population towards the informal economy hinders improvement of the general level of skill of the labour force and in consequence reduces the possibilities of innovation, improved productivity and greater competitiveness.

Lastly, it is a social necessity in that the growing number of "pockets of poverty" undermines social cohesion. Corporatist and group strategies take precedence over the collective interest, which ceases to have meaning for people. The overstraining of the social fabric always contributes to the weakening of democracy.

What are we trying to achieve in the fight against poverty? Disparities in income, life expectancy or city-based careers will certainly continue to exist. While the fight against poverty cannot be targeted on the total eradication, once and for all, of these disparities, its target is the close, binding and decisive correlation between them. Its objective is to shatter that alliance and break the vicious circle it creates.

Timeliness of educational action

It should be borne in mind that such a question is only meaningful if focused on ways and means and not on the principle itself. Persons in a situation of insecurity, like those trapped in poverty, have just as many rights as other citizens; but here it is more difficult to make those rights effective, especially as such persons do not always regard the right to education as essential.

The fight against poverty, and in particular against the new forms it is adopting, involves the attempt to halt the accumulation and increasing rigidity of the many factors that produce it. Emergency assistance, often of a makeshift nature, is never enough. It is necessary to act upon all of the forms of insecurity. This has led most governments to introduce policies incorporating a system of guaranteed minimum income. But the problem of the vulnerability-insecurity-poverty spiral is so evidently not just a problem of income that these systems cannot suffice.

And yet education seems far removed from the preoccupations of persons suffering from poverty. Everyone knows the unemployed are more intent on a job than on training. In this connection, we must not underestimate the awareness that these people may have of their real chances, given the present state of the labour markets.

Indeed, these persons have all had many contacts with such an education, which has been but a source of setbacks, or with such training courses, which have brought further setbacks because their own capacities and experience were not properly taken into account. Is education-oriented action advisable?

A revival of initial education

If education-oriented action is necessary, it should also be remembered that it should be accompanied by action at the teaching level. The democratisation of access to systems of teaching has remained incomplete because it was not accompanied by doubts regarding the principles of operation of these systems. In all countries, the school systems are suffering from having had to absorb the big post-war baby boom, without the scaling-up involving a genuine change in models and practices.

A class of 30 pupils has however nothing in common with a group of 15 as so strongly recommended by psycho-sociologists and all theoreticians and practitioners of adult education. As for "new learning", new mathematics, global reading, sex education or great conjunctures of history, they relate more to the realm of an elitist analysis - probably justified - of the changes in our societies and their consequences for necessary basic knowledge than to a will to change the methods themselves.

New operating models

New operating models must therefore be found for teaching systems. Inter alia, we must adapt the methodological experience gained from adult education operations to teaching intended for children and adolescents: curricula must no longer be structured in terms of material to be assimilated but in accordance with targets of capabilities and skills; effort should be given to groups composed by level rather than groups composed by age; and the time taken up by the transmission of knowledge should be reduced so as correspondingly to lengthen the time available for its acquisition.

As has been possible in various places, we should go beyond the confines of the school. The suburbs, those borderlands of marginalisation, are characterised by the co-existence of numerous ethnic groups, which the school neglects or even ignores, whereas its pupils have originated from those groups and pass the main part of their lives there.

The ordering of a social network is a determining factor. It is one of the dimensions which the Council of Europe Topic Group on the long-term unemployed has highlighted: the system of relationships is too limited or too weak, sometimes both, effectively to help the individual to find work. This consideration has led instructors in the processes of integrating the unemployed and social work mechanisms in the case of the marginalised formally to take over this function of replacing a non-existent network.

Furthermore, the school should exploit the experience and the knowledge acquired by pupils in their family milieu and their environment, so as to yield genuinely communicable and transferable skills. School support experiments have already been undertaken in the evenings in these places with the help of volunteer teams.

Another place for the school and another division of labour are becoming discernable, and are well worth discussion. Going beyond the boundaries of the school, diversifying the places of learning, better co-ordinating teaching with knowledge acquired elsewhere, organising modular systems whose purposes are more directly understandable, modifying procedures for evaluation and certification, transforming the educational relationship of "dispensing knowledge" into a relationship consisting of receptiveness, taking into care and educational assistance, utilising the methodological learning derived from personal work - all these are the pillars of a new approach.

If the struggle against poverty and the descent into insecurity is to be genuinely undertaken, it must, at the level of initial education, take the form of a firmly differential school in which the young people's strong points will be used to improve their weak ones, care being taken to ensure that the system does not irretrievably eliminate all those who do not go through the regular mill of their schooling.

The need to diversify objectives

Education must be integrated into a long-term comprehensive action. It must pay as much attention as possible to individuals, their particular experience and their self-confidence in order to help them to construct their own project. It should facilitate the definition of a project to promote integration and give backing during and after its implementation.

This educational activity is in itself already a first step towards integration, or at least towards a different and probably more satisfactory integration. It should be so organised as not to appear as the "moral" counterpart of some kind of rehabilitation, such as showing proof of courage and goodwill.

More types of partnership

Although an approach based on insecurity as an evolving process gives a more coherent framework, it is necessary to identify and concentrate on the factors that contribute to the deterioration of situations. This said, one of the main problems is to find the worst victims of poverty: they are, by definition, the most invisible. The method of making contact with them through the register of those receiving aid quite logically omits all those who have not received any. In our bureaucratic societies, a person unknown to the administration is non-existent.

This difficulty can be resolved by working in partnership with the charitable associations that are in daily contact with these people.

The problem of the insecurity-poverty spiral highlights the need to change the nature of education and the need to transform the responsible institutions. The contexts of partnership from which it should spring and within which it should develop cannot be divorced from a vast reorganisation of society. The problems posed are intimately bound up with an expansion of personal services which are at present cruelly lacking in our societies: day care for young children, the prevention of delinquency, home help for families and elderly persons, the reintegration of drop-outs, support teaching and the fight against functional illiteracy, etc are all examples of these new services.

There is a growing need for appropriate back-up services. This problem cannot be dealt with through traditional administrative frameworks, in the first place because the new employment situation is leading more and more often not to the search for a job but to the creation of one, and the poor are by definition powerless in this respect. Secondly, the work of voluntary associations demonstrates the need for individual back-up.

The need to decentralise action

All projects should be closely attuned, geographically and socially, to the requirements of the persons concerned, ie they should be based on their immediate neighbourhood and environment and focused on the roles they are potentially able to play.

The exclusion process should be regarded as a triple dimension of confinement:

- in a process of isolation;
- in a vicious circle of long-term unemployment;
- in a rationale of assistance.

Consequently, any positive action to combat poverty must be based on these three dimensions and must endeavour to block their effects. It would appear necessary to awaken a strong local civic commitment.

Writing in *Le Monde diplomatique* of June 1988, C Julien says "it is first of all in a local context that a new meaning should be assigned to the great slogan of our time, solidarity. If the latter takes the form solely of social benefits granted to the worst victims of poverty, it will end up by being regarded as a handout, whereas the necessary redistribution of financial resources respects the dignity of everyone when it is accompanied by action on the part of all members of society ...".

The very poor and the insecure seen as active partners

One should work not so much for them as with them, listen to what they have to say about their poverty and their rejection of it. Who could be so unreasonable as to think that such destitution is acceptable? The poor spend their whole lives in finding ways of surviving, even in moments of extreme distress, even when caught up in alcoholism. Literary works often of the "popular" kind, which keep on magnifying resistance to adversity and the inevitability of fate, simply mask the element of struggle and the daily invention of (poor) solutions to ensure survival. They also serve to mask the fact that definitive solutions at the individual level are impossible.

The problem is of a social nature. Only a collective solution is possible. To have some chance of success, the combat for reintegration must be backed up. That it is why it is utterly inadequate for "a state to refrain from intervention of any kind so that all citizens may be free to think, associate, travel and participate, particularly when their lives are suddenly invaded by some form of economic insecurity".

The back-up in question requires that the very poor be placed in a situation where they are able to work with others to find the most appropriate solutions. In this context, education is a suitable means of action, but it should be regarded as a process of socialisation rather than instruction, that is to say, the acquisition of knowledge and skills common to a society that will permit each individual to participate fully in social life as an active and useful member of society.

CONCLUSION

It is absolutely essential to combat poverty. This is not just a question of ethics, although that in itself would be sufficient reason; it is also an economic and political necessity. Modern societies will not be able to survive as democracies if they do not give themselves the means to check poverty.

Nor can there be any question of dreaming of a radical solution that would eliminate all poverty. We are simply seeking to do a little bit better than what is now being done. Doing better means breaking the vicious circles that are continually dragging individuals and groups further and further towards marginalisation. It means halting the spiral of exclusion, neutralising the poverty trap before it ensnares a person once and for all. In other words, we want to break the chains that interlink economic, social, cultural and other factors to produce poverty. Doing better therefore means preventing social processes from becoming tight and unyielding. Such could be the project for a democracy and hence for the Council of Europe.

Even in the case of the new poverty, education is not the triggering factor. But it can contribute to the success of ongoing actions. It is capable of slowing down or even putting an end to any subsequent tendency towards inflexibility. Education has therefore very definitely its place in the fight against poverty. Educators in the generic sense of the word should take their place in a set of social strategies in which employment/unemployment and socialisation are determining factors. They should act in concert with partners and organise partnerships on a mutually complementary basis. They should use the resources of the environment like the specific skills acquired by individuals, assigning to the latter a central place in their activities. They should start from the most general level of the social generation of skills.

Here it is not a matter of organising disjointed actions but of creating educational continua; not a matter merely of retraining individuals at a given workplace but of aiming to enhance their motivation and their chances of negotiating the long-term sale of their skills on the labour market; it is not a matter merely of vocational training but of extending the cover of these educational continua to the social skills of individuals, including their capacity to see themselves as persons legitimately exercising their functions as full citizens.

Actions of this kind exist already but little is known about them. One of the first tasks to be undetaken is to identify and evaluate the many initiatives of this kind in order to arrive at a more systematic understanding of their positive aspects and successes as well as of the shortcomings they will undoubtedly reveal.

Assisting the most disadvantaged calls not only for resources but also for cultural frameworks and values that make such assistance acceptable. Measures taken to help the "needy" - the elderly, the disabled, children, ie essentially individuals - show the degree of this acceptability. In contrast, at a time when our societies consider that solidarity has been assured, the recent debate in France on the introduction of a minimum income, implying assistance on a long-term basis, has clearly shown that the central question concerning poverty in our societies is the question of assistance to able-bodied adults. In this connection it is important to recall the fundamental contribution of P. H. Imbert, who stresses the opposition between "civil and political rights on the one hand and economic, social and cultural rights on the other". Perhaps the time has also come to challenge this opposition within the framework of a new blueprint for society? If so, we should bear in mind D Donnison's remark that "the Fourth world is there to remind us that it is not up to us to decide which human rights should be respected and which trampled underfoot. Human rights are indivisible".

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